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**Legitimization and Delegitimization of Social Hierarchy**

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**Abstract**

Although status and wealth are related facets of social stratification, their association is only moderate. In this paper we demonstrate that justification of wealth versus status can be independent processes. To this end, we introduce a novel, non-declarative measure of system justification. The measure is based on within-individual correlations between the judgments of how a group "is doing" and how it "should be doing". Two studies demonstrated that the between-group differentiation in terms of material wealth was delegitimized – the more a group was perceived as wealthy, the less it was desired to be wealthy. However, the between-group differentiation in terms of status was generally legitimized – the more a group was perceived as influential, the more it was desired to be influential. We conclude by discussing the role of socio-political context in active legitimization and delegitimization of different aspects of the system.

*Keywords*: system justification, delegitimization, status, wealth

Legitimization and Delegitimization of Social Hierarchy

Widespread beliefs about the legitimacy of the existing social, economic and political status quo contribute to efficient functioning of the social system. The system simply works better when people believe that material resources are distributed in a fair way among the citizens, that everyone has a fair shot at wealth and well-being, and that power is held by those who use it for the greater good (rather than the particularistic good of power holders; Hafer & Begue, 2005). Such a world is seen as more predictable, controllable and overall safer (Jost & Van der Toorn, 2012). It fosters a belief that working within the system can improve our life and provides cues as to how this can be achieved. In such a world efforts pay off and help change the world for the better, making people happier and making life more meaningful (Dalbert, 2002). No wonder that people are motivated to justify the political and economic status quo and to bolster legitimacy of the existing social order— as has been postulated by the system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

The last two decades accumulated an impressive amount of data showing various ways in which the social system is being legitimized and justified. One way involves the development and proliferation of system-justifying ideologies, such as political conservatism (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003) or fair market ideology, which maintain that market-based procedures and outcomes are efficient and inherently fair (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, & Hunyady, 2003). Another way of system legitimization involves the development and maintenance of complementary stereotypes which justify and perpetuate the existing social hierarchy. For example, research conducted in several countries (Cichocka, Winiewski, Bilewicz, Bukowski, & Jost, in press; Cuddy, et al., 2009; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermandi, & Mosso, 2005; Kay, Jost, Mandisodza, Petrocelli, & Johnson, 2007) has shown that high status groups are generally stereotyped as agentic and competent (which might strengthen their elevated position), while low status groups are

stereotyped as communal and warm (which contributes to keeping them in their inferior positions).  Yet another way of system legitimization involves the perceptions of individuals in a way that justifies the existing inequalities.  For example, successful persons are lionized and losers are derogated on dimensions relevant to success, though the opposite is true on irrelevant dimensions, where victims are compensated for their misfortunes (Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005).

On the other hand, there is an increasing amount of research suggesting that some societies do not justify their social, economic, and political system to the same extent as others. Rather, they express high levels of disillusionment with the existing status quo.  A recent review of data coming from over 20 countries revealed that – compared to capitalist societies – citizens of post-communist countries show lower levels of system justification in general, and with respect to the political and economic order in particular (Cichocka & Jost, 2014).  For example, a nationally representative survey conducted in Poland showed that most Poles score extremely low on measures of system justification (Wojciszke, Cichocka, Baryla, Szymkow, & Mikiewicz, 2014). This cannot be explained by simple differences in status (income and education were only weak predictors of system justification) nor by preferences for the old communist versus the new capitalist system (system justification remained low for people of both preferences).

However, the extent to which people justify the system may depend on the specific system domain.  There are reasons to expect that the distribution of material wealth is a domain especially prone to delegitimization. One reason for this could be that, compared to beliefs about distribution of status, beliefs concerning wealth distribution seem to be unstable and dependent on situational influences.  For example, in post-communist Poland, such aspects of status hierarchies like occupational prestige remain fairly similar in the communist and capitalist system, with professors, miners, and physicians located invariably at the top of

the social hierarchy (CBOS, 2013). At the same time, the beliefs about distribution of wealth have changed in the last two decades. Income inequality in Poland has been steadily increasing between 1989 (when the system changed) and 2005 (Brzezinski, Jancewicz, & Letki, 2013), although compared to other countries it can still be considered moderate (the Gini coefficient equals 0.35, a value preceded by 94 countries with higher inequality and followed by 46 ones with lower inequality; CIA, 2014). Nevertheless, the changes in actual income inequality have been closely accompanied by changes in the subjective perceptions of income inequalities. The percentage of Poles believing that income differences are too large is high and steadily rising – from 80% in 1992 to 92% in 2008 (Brzezinski et al., 2013, p. 65). Thus, in subjective perceptions of the Polish society the income inequalities are intolerably high and this view seems to be shared independently of social status.

Given such widely shared perceptions of inequality, it is not surprising that Poles approach material wealth with a substantial dose of suspicion. For example, Wojciszke and Dowhyluk (2006) found that successful people were perceived as more competent but less moral than those failing. Mikiewicz and Wojciszke (2014) manipulated orthogonally two facets of status which usually go together – rank or position at work versus material wealth. They found that higher rank was legitimized by heightened perceptions of competence (but not morality), while greater wealth was delegitimized by lower perceptions of morality (but not competence). Perceiving a person as rich was accompanied by a conviction that the person is harmful for other people, the perceiver included. Although these effects might be specific to post-communist Poland, it is plausible that the economic crisis will also affect perceptions of wealth distribution in Western countries. For example, while Norton and Ariely (2011) demonstrated that Americans dramatically underestimated the *level* of wealth inequality, a recent study by Chambers, Swan, and Heesacker (2014) indicated that Americans might actually overestimate the *rise* of income inequality. These perceptions

might further change in response to current criticisms of the economic system, which might no longer provide predictability or safety.

Although status and wealth are related facets of social stratification, they could and should be studied independently as they show a fair degree of independence. For example, the correlation between income and education ascertained in a Polish national sample is $r =$ .43 (Wojciszke et al., 2014). A study involving a large USA national sample revealed a very similar value of $r = .42$ (Singh-Manoux, Adler, & Marmot, 2003). These correlations indicate at least some degree of independence of different aspects of social stratification. This opens the possibility that the level of system justification varies as a function of the aspect studied. In this research we test a hypothesis that some aspects of social hierarchies can be legitimized while other aspects can be actively delegitimized by the same individual. Specifically, we predict that in some contexts (such as post-communist Poland), between-group differences in status could be perceived as legitimate, while differences in material wealth could be perceived as illegitimate. One challenge in investigating such differences is that they might not be captured by explicit expressions of system justification. Probably the most popular questionnaire measuring system justification is the scale developed by Kay and Jost (2003). It consists of items conveying clearly positive or negative views of the social world (e.g. "Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness." vs. "Our society is getting worse every year."). The problem is that societies differ in whether it is normative to express positive or negative opinions about the social world.

At least in some Western societies expressions of positive opinions about the system are socially approved and expected (e.g. Alves & Correia, 2008), while expressions of system criticism are counter-normative (Diekman, & Goodfriend, 2007). This is not the case in the post-communist societies. Numerous studies have shown that Poles hold and express very negative opinions about the social world and consider themselves compulsive complainers

(Wojciszke, 2004). Similar signs of the negativity norm are found in Hungary (Hunyady, 2009) and the Czech Republic (Macek & Markova, 2004). Thus, the differences in system legitimization between capitalist and post-communist countries may stem not from convictions about the system but from cultural norms of expression.

To go beyond mere declarations, we developed a new measure of indirect system justification based on the premise that system justification should be linked to a motivated tendency to perceive "what is" as "what should be" (Kay et al., 2009). We propose an analytical index of the degree of system justification which involves within-participant correlations between the perceived and desired outcomes of social groups. Correlation is extremely difficult to detect by the "naked eye" (Nisbett & Ross, 1980), as it reflects the structure, rather than content of social judgments. People are typically aware of the content but not the structure of their beliefs. The proposed index may be considered an indirect measure of system justification as it goes beyond subjective declarations – rather, it is based on statistical analyses of these declarations.

## Overview of the Current Research

In the current studies participants were asked to rate social groups in terms of how well they were currently doing and should be doing as regards of social status (Study 1a) or wealth (Study 1b). In Study 2 each participant answered questions about both dimensions. The actual versus desired ratings were correlated separately for each participant, yielding an indirect index of system justification. Positive $r$s indicate higher system justification (e.g. the better outcomes the group has, the better off they should be) while negative $r$s indicate de-legitimization (the better the group's outcomes, the worse off they should be). An additional advantage of such intra-individual correlations is that their significance may be tested allowing to decide for each participant individually whether he or she shows legitimization or delegitimization in absolute terms (i.e., compared to $r = .00$).

## Studies 1a and 1b

The aim of Study 1a was to validate the indirect measure of justification of status. In this study participants rated social groups in terms of social status operationalized as an amount of influence – the key ingredient of status (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001) and power (Wojciszke & Struzynska-Kujalowicz, 2007). Because we predicted status to be generally legitimized, we expected mostly positive actual-desired correlations. To assess the convergent and divergent validity of the proposed measure we examined its relations with an explicitly declared system justification, as well as with beliefs about social (in)justice and trust. We expected indirect system justification to be positively yet moderately associated with explicit system justification. We also expected it to be negatively associated with perceptions of injustice, but to a lesser extent with generalized social trust. Study 1b used similar methods to Study 1a, except that rather than asking about influence or status, we asked our participants to rate the actual versus desired wealth of the same social groups. Our expectation was that the distribution of material wealth would be delegitimized, meaning that the actual-desired correlation will be mostly negative. In Study 1b, we also sought to further test the validity of the indirect index of system justification by testing a hypothesis about the system justifying beliefs serving a palliative function, i.e. making people overall happier (presumably by facilitating  rationalization of social inequalities; Napier & Jost, 2008). Hence, we expected the indirect index of system justification to be positively associated with self-reported life satisfaction.

### Method

***Participants.*** One hundred students and working adults participated in Study 1a (50 women, 50 men, $M_{age} = 23.70$, $SD = 3.45$). One hundred students and working adults participated in Study 1b (60 women, 40 men, $M_{age} = 32.71$, $SD = 7.40$). All participants were contacted at a university (where the working adults participated in a post-graduate training).

***Procedure and measures***.

*Indirect system justification*. Participants received a list of 30 social groups at the beginning and the end of the study. The list of groups was pretested in a pilot study where 25 students were asked to name groups that could be considered typical for Polish society. The thirty most frequently mentioned groups were compiled into an alphabetical list used in the present study. Most groups related to professions or occupations (see Table 1). No ethnic, racial or religious groups were mentioned, probably because the Polish society is extremely homogenous with respect of these categories – over 90% is white, Polish, and Catholic (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland, 2013). To measure indirect justification of status, we asked participants to rate each group for the actual amount of influence within the country on a scale ranging from 1 (*no influence at all*) to 4 (*average*) to 7 (*very strong influence*) and then for the amount of influence desired by the participant for each group on a similar scale – 1 (*should have no influence at all*) to 7 (*definitely should have influence*). To measure the indirect justification of material wealth, participants were asked to rate each group for its actual material wealth on a scale ranging from 1 (*this group is doing very poorly*) to 7 (*this group is doing very well*), and then for the amount of wealth desired for each group on a similar scale – 1 (*this group should be doing much worse*) to 7 (*this group should be doing much better*). The order of ratings (actual – desired) was counterbalanced but initial analyses showed no order effects on the results. Pearson's *r* correlations between the judgments of actual and desired state of each of the 30 groups were computed separately for each participant. Because Pearson's *r* statistics does not have normal distribution, Fisher's $z_r$

transformations were used in all statistical analyses involving this index ($M = .44$, $SD = .31$,

for status differentiation in Study 1a and $M = -.69$, $SD = .37$ for wealth distribution in Study

1b).

*Declarative beliefs about the society.* Between their two ratings of the 30 groups, the

participants filled a series of explicit measures. All of them used a scale from 1 (*definitely*

*disagree*) to 7 (*definitely agree*). In Study 1a the scales measured system justification, social

injustice, and social trust, while in Study 1b social injustice and life satisfaction were

measured.

System justification was measured in Study 1a with the eight-item System

Justification Scale developed by Kay and Jost (2003, p. 828). Sample items: "In general, you

find society to be fair.", "Poland is the best country in the world to live in.", "Our society is

getting worse every year" (reverse scored). The items constituted a satisfactory scale ($\alpha =$

.70; $M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.80$).

Social trust was measured in Study 1a with a Social Trust Scale developed and

validated cross-culturally by Rozycka-Tran et al. (2015). This scale ($\alpha = .85$; $M = 4.10$, $SD =$

0.93) consists of the following seven items capturing the conviction that people can be

generally trusted: (1) Most people are basically good and kind. (2) I expect most people to

behave in a manner that benefits others. (3) If you act in good faith with people, almost all of

them will reciprocate with fairness to you. (4) Most people treat others well. (5) Most people

are able to selflessly help a person in need. (6) Usually, people are good by nature. (7) Most

people can be trusted.

Social injustice was measured in both studies with a 10-item Social Injustice Scale

developed by Wojciszke (2005). The items read: (1) There is no justice nowadays in the

world. (2) The rich or powerful never get punished for their misdeeds. (3) Many problems

can only be dealt with bribes or connections. (4) Elbowing your way is more successful than

merit.  (5) Actual merits are often not appreciated.  (6) Many wrongs go unpunished.  (7)

Many harms of ordinary people are never made up for.  (8) Your honesty usually turns against

you. (9) The rich are getting richer at the cost of the poor.  (10) The country's wealth is

unfairly distributed among the citizens.  For Study 1a α = .86; $M$ = .4.71, $SD$ = 0.9, for Study

1b α = .86, $M$ = 3.36, $SD$ = .64.

In Study 1b, the life satisfaction measure consisted of ratings of satisfaction with six

life domains – family finances, state of the country, job satisfaction, accommodation

conditions, prospects for future, and moral norms of the society (α = .76, $M$ = 3.66, $SD$ = .72).

**Results and discussion**

The distribution of the actual-desired correlations serving as the indirect measure of

system justification is shown in Figure 1.  In Study 1a, the mean actual-desired correlation for

status was $M$ = .39 ($SD$ = .24) and was significantly different from zero, $t(99)$ = 14.39, $p <$

.001, $d$ = 1.44.  This suggests that status differentiation of the perceived groups was generally

legitimized.  Indeed, 68% of the participants yielded significant positive correlation

coefficients ($rs > .30$).  Thus, a majority of the sample perceived the status differentiation as

legitimate.

In Study 1b the mean actual-desired correlation for wealth was $M$ = −.69 ($SD$ = .37)

and was significantly different from zero, $t(99)$ = 18.44, $p < .001$, $d$ = 1.84, indicating that the

wealth differentiation of the perceived groups was strongly delegitimized.  As many as 86%

of the participants yielded significant negative correlation coefficients ($r$ = −.30 or stronger)

meaning that the majority of the sample perceived the wealth differentiation as illegitimate.

When the actual versus desired status and the actual versus desired wealth are

analyzed on the level of group averages ($N$ = 30, Table 3) it appears that the higher is the

group status the lower is its desired wealth ($r$ = -.52).  In Table 1 the groups are listed in the

descending order of the (perceived) actual material wealth.  An inspection of the first two

columns of this table helps to elucidate the negative actual-desired correlations. Each of the 10 most prosperous groups (from politicians to IT workers) was desired to have less of wealth (the mean actual-desired difference was 1.90). On the other hand, each of the 10 least prosperous groups (from the jobless to scientists) was desired to have more of wealth (the mean actual-desired difference was –2.88). In other words, all relatively rich groups were desired to be poorer. Even to a higher degree, all relatively poor groups were desired to be richer. It seems that equality was a much more important criterion of justice than equity for our participants.

We computed correlations between the all variables measured in Study 1a (Table 2). In line with our expectations, the index of indirect justification of status correlated positively with system justification, $r$ (100) = .30, $p$ = .003, and negatively with the injustice beliefs, $r$ (100) = -.36, $p$ < .001. These moderate yet significant correlations provide initial evidence that the index can be used as an indirect measure of system justification. At the same time, the indirect index was not significantly associated with generalized social trust, $r$ (100) = .04, $p$ = .69, which can be considered an indication of divergent validity.

In Study 1b (wealth distribution) the indirect index of wealth legitimization correlated negatively with the injustice beliefs, $r$ (100) = -.24, $p$ = .016, and positively with life satisfaction, $r$ (100) = .25, $p$ = .012. These correlations further support the construct validity of the indirect index of system justification, additionally confirming the claim regarding the palliative function of the justification strivings.

## Study 2

Studies 1a and 1b clearly confirmed our expectations. However, they should be interpreted with caution as the two studies were conducted separately and there was no random assignment of participants to conditions of rating wealth versus status. To address these issues in Study 2 we asked the same participants to rate both the status and wealth

domain, counterbalancing the order of judgments. We wanted to replicate previous findings in a within-participants design and to check how the two indirect indices of (de)legitimization of social hierarchy are related.

**Method**

*Participants.* Participants were 107 first-year university students (83 women, 18 men, 6 did not report their gender, $M_{age}$ = 20.31, $SD$ = 1.50).

*Procedure and measures*

The procedure of measuring the non-declarative indices of status and wealth (de)legitimization was identical to that of Study 1. Half of participants were asked to rate the actual and desired wealth of 30 groups at the first session and to rate the actual and desired influence of the same groups at the second session. Another half of participants were asked to do the same in the opposite order. The two sessions were separated by a one-hour class in psychology.

**Results**

As can be seen in Figure 2, the distribution of indirect indices of status and wealth (de)legitimization was very similar to that of Studies 1a and 1b. A 2 x 2 ANOVA with the order (first wealth vs. first status) as a between-participants factor and repeated measures on the domain (status vs. wealth) revealed two effects. The first was a very strong effect of domain, $F$ (1, 105) = 278.61, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .73$. Status was generally legitimized, $M = .36$ ($SD = .30$) and this value was significantly different from 0, $t$ (106) = 12.58, $p < .001$. Wealth distribution was generally delegitmized, $M = -.39$ ($SD = .43$) and this value was significantly different from 0 as well, $t$ (106) = 9.20, $p < .001$. The second finding was a significant interaction between the domain and order, $F$ (1, 105) = 6.87, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, meaning that the discrepancy between legitimization of status and wealth was slightly more pronounced in

the "wealth first" order (− .50 for wealth vs. 41 for status) than in the "status first" order (− .32 for wealth vs. .35 for status), although the basic pattern remained the same in both conditions.

The present study replicated the previous findings with a within-participant design. The same participants both legitimized status differentiation and delegitimized wealth distribution among the same set of target groups. The two tendencies ($z_r$s for status and wealth) appeared weakly correlated, $r (106) = .20$, $p = .038$, although one fourth of the sample showed both legitimization of status and delegitmization of material wealth. We expected these two tendencies to be rather unrelated (based on the assumption that distributions of wealth and status are perceived in different ways). The emergence of this weak positive correlation may be an evidence of some consistency pressure operating in the perception of the whole social system. Finally, as seen in Table 3, also the group-level correlations replicated the previous findings.

## General Discussion

Although much data supports the variety of ways in which status quo is legitimized and justified (Jost & Van der Toorn, 2012), these system justification tendencies heavily depend on social context − as is the case with other motives. The system justification motive becomes active when the system is threatened, when individuals are highly dependent on the system or when they perceive it as inescapable (Kay & Friesen, 2011). For example, people who feel more dependent on authorities, such as university professors or policemen, start to view the authority figures as more legitimate and display more trust and deference to them (Van der Torn, Tyler & Jost, 2010). Similarly, people who are primed with the idea that the system is inescapable (e.g. that it is hard to emigrate from the country) and are later informed about a gender gap in salaries, tend to blame "genuine gender differences" for the gap, rather than the system unfairness (Laurin, Sheperd & Kay, 2010).

The present findings may be seen as further evidence for the crucial role of context in justification strivings. In the post-communist societies, increasing income differentiation is a novel phenomenon, not yet fully accepted by citizens (Brzezinski et al., 2013). In our research the material aspect of social hierarchies was strongly delegitimized – the relatively rich groups are desired to be poorer, while the relatively poor groups are desired to be richer. This may be typical for the post-communist context. For example, Wojciszke and colleagues (2014) replicated the negative actual-desired correlations for material wealth. However, they found them to be constrained to Poland. In a more established market economy (Germany) these correlations were positive, indicating that the wealth distribution was legitimized.

On the other hand, differentiation of social groups in terms of prestige and influence seems to be typical for both the old (communist) and new (capitalist) system and we found this differentiation to be legitimized in contemporary Poland. As we observed in our research, relatively influential groups were desired to be influential, while relatively less influential groups were desired to remain non-influential. Again, this pattern of results was replicated by Wojciszke and colleagues (2014), who found it in both in a Polish and a German sample. Clearly, social and historical context can decide whether an aspect of social hierarchy is legitimized or delegitimized.

In the present work we introduced a new indirect measure of processes of (de)legitimization. This new tool is based on the correlation between the actual and desired outcomes of social groups (or individuals). One advantage of this measure is that a correlation may be tested for significance within individuals helping thereby to decide who is legitimizing the status quo and who is not. It also helps overcome between-culture differences in norms governing the expression of positive versus negative views of the social world. It is our hope that the new measure will prove especially useful in comparative political and cross-cultural research.

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Table 1

Mean ratings of the actual and desired wealth as well as the actual and desired status (Studies 1a and 1b).

| Group | Actual wealth | Desired wealth | Actual status | Desired status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Politicians | 6.36 | 2.92 [a] | 6.22 | 5.81 [a] |
| Lawyers | 6.28 | 4.03 [a] | 5.18 | 5.23 |
| Criminals | 6.26 | 1.61 [a] | 5.14 | 1.45 [a] |
| Bankers | 5.89 | 4.23 [a] | 4.98 | 4.68 |
| Managers | 5.89 | 4.26 [a] | 4.63 | 4.15 |
| Directors | 5.86 | 4.24 [a] | 4.94 | 4.40 |
| Clergy | 5.75 | 3.52 [a] | 5.32 | 2.75 [a] |
| Businessmen | 5.24 | 4.80 [a] | 5.08 | 4.99 |
| Economists | 5.20 | 4.44 [a] | 5.59 | 5.60 |
| IT workers | 5.19 | 4.82 [a] | 4.31 | 4.23 |
| Journalists | 5.14 | 4.63 [a] | 6.09 | 5.12 [a] |
| Physicians | 4.99 | 5.19 | 4.71 | 4.50 |
| Sportsmen | 4.97 | 4.70 [a] | 3.61 | 3.54 |
| Artists | 4.87 | 4.77 [a] | 4.12 | 4.32 [b] |
| Military | 4.65 | 4.59 [a] | 4.09 | 3.97 |
| Educated | 4.30 | 5.87 [b] | 5.36 | 6.10 |
| Officers | 4.19 | 4.58 | 4.36 | 3.92 |
| Commerce workers | 4.18 | 4.72 | 4.52 | 4.09 |
| Taxi drivers | 4.14 | 4.49 | 2.71 | 2.94 [b] |
| Scientists | 3.96 | 5.73 [b] | 4.79 | 5.54 [b] |
| Tradesmen | 3.65 | 5.21 [b] | 3.36 | 3.64 [b] |
| Police | 3.47 | 5.56 [b] | 4.21 | 4.60 [b] |
| Students | 3.45 | 5.34 [b] | 3.90 | 5.15 [b] |
| Teachers | 3.26 | 5.76 [b] | 3.99 | 4.66 [b] |
| Farmers | 2.93 | 5.41 [b] | 4.02 | 3.76 |
| Miners | 2.87 | 5.24 [b] | 3.85 | 3.22 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Workers | 2.73 | 5.43 [b] | 3.28 | 3.57 [b] |
| Retired | 2.11 | 5.95 [b] | 3.37 | 3.32 [b] |
| Pensioners | 2.06 | 5.93 [b] | 2.99 | 3.15 [b] |
| Unemployed | 1.66 | 5.42 [b] | 3.97 | 3.97 |

Note.

[a] Groups reliably desired to be worse than they are in terms of wealth or status. [b] Groups reliably desired to be better than they are in terms of wealth or status (based on 95% confidence interval analyzes).

Table 2

*Correlations between indirect and declarative system justification, beliefs in injustice as well as social trust (Study 1a)*

| | *1* | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Indirect justification of status | -- | | |
| 2. System justification | .30** | -- | |
| 3. Social injustice | -.46*** | -.63*** | -- |
| 4. Social trust | .04 | .49*** | -.30** |

*Note.* ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

*Group-level correlations between the actual and desired status as well as the actual and*

*desired material wealth of the 30 groups studied (Studies 1a and 1b above the diagonal;*

*Study 2 below the diagonal)*

|  | *1* | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Actual status | -- | .52** | .71*** | -.52** |
| 2. Desired status | .48** | -- | .20 | .27 |
| 3. Actual wealth | .78** | .21 | -- | -.78*** |
| 4. Desired wealth | -.30 | .61** | -.51** | -- |

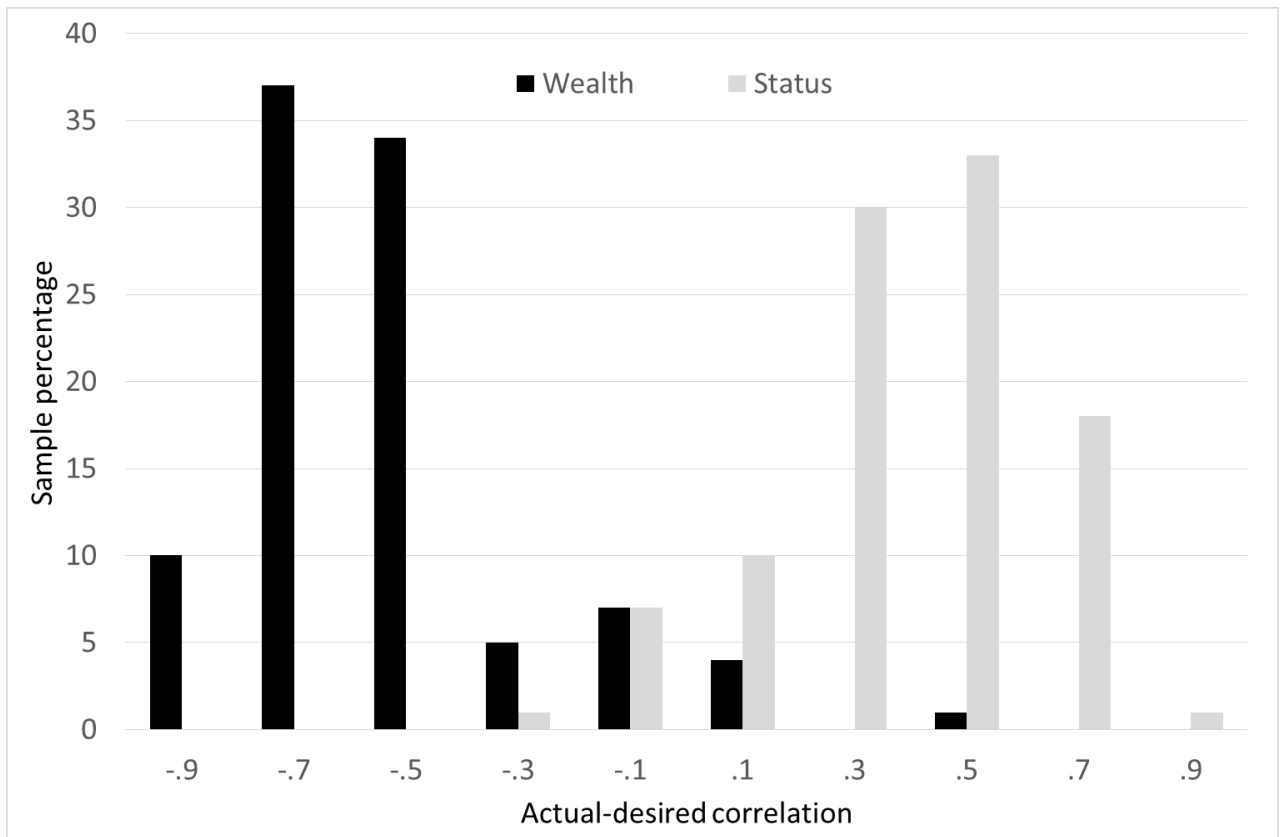*Note*. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.

*Figure 1*. Distribution of within-participant correlations between the actual and desired status (Study 1a) and wealth (Study 1b) of social groups.
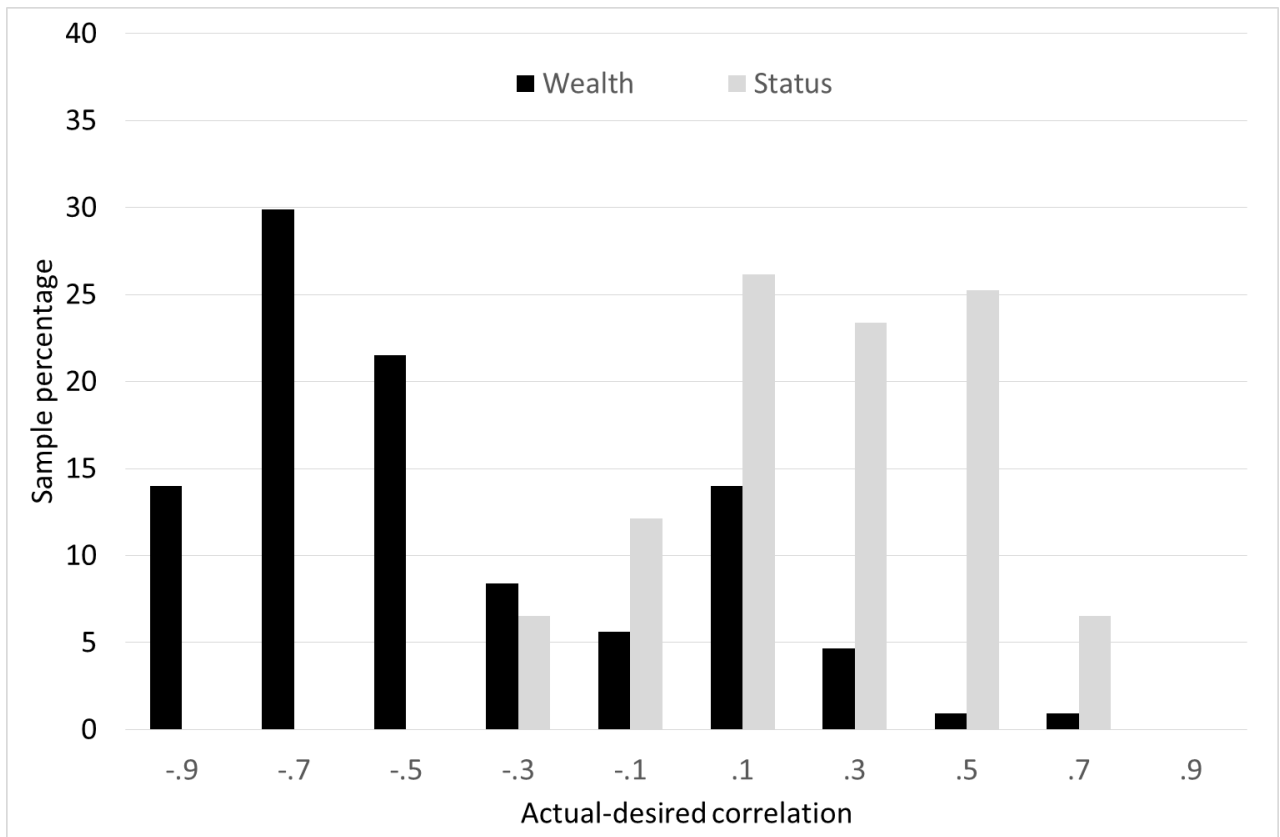
*Figure 2*. Distribution of within-participant correlations between the actual and desired status and wealth of social groups (Study 2).